



CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
for CRVS Systems

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SNAPSHOT

OF CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEMS OF

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



ECA

Program Information

About the Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems

Housed at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Systems is a global knowledge and resource hub that actively supports national efforts to develop, strengthen, and scale CRVS systems. It collaborates with organizations and experts to broker access to information and expertise, including global standards, tools, research evidence, and relevant good practice.

The Centre of Excellence was established with funding from Global Affairs Canada and IDRC and contributes directly to the work of the Global Financing Facility, a key financing platform of the UN Secretary General's Global Strategy for Women's, Children's, and adolescents' health.

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This publication was authored by Yacob Zewoldi, a consultant for the Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems.

International Development Research Centre
PO Box 8500,
Ottawa, ON Canada Tel 1 613-236-61613
Email: crvs@idrc.ca
www.CRVSystems.ca

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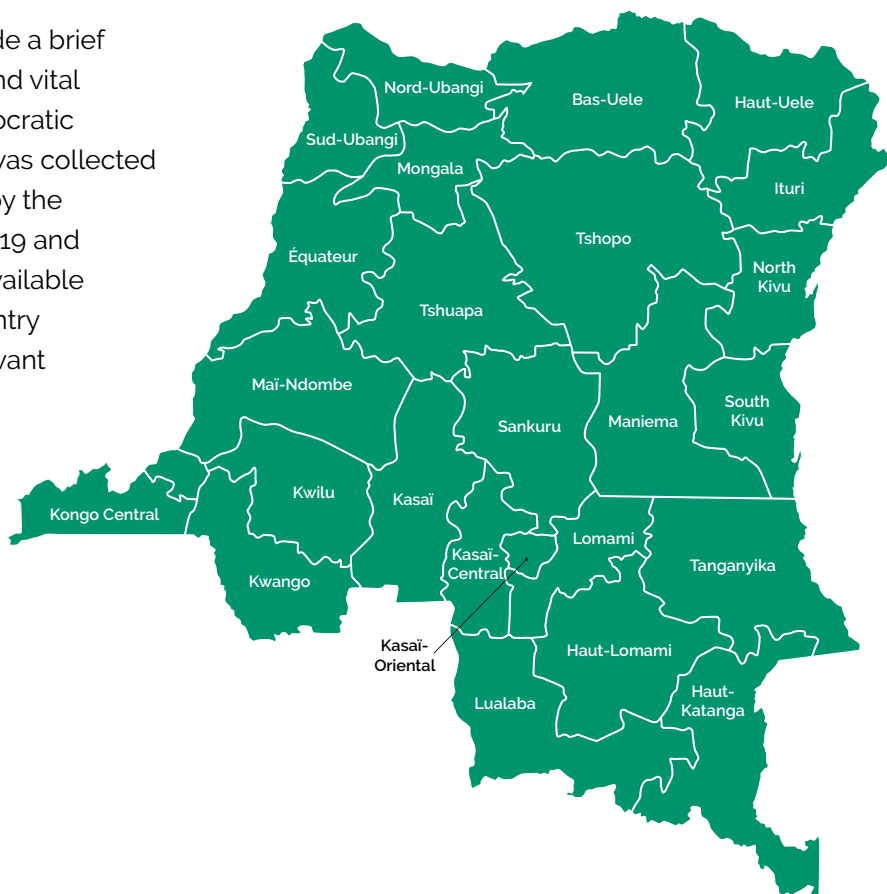
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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide a brief introduction to the civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The information was collected through a questionnaire completed by the Civil Registration Division in March 2019 and supplemented by a desk review of available documents. The report presents country background, selected indicators relevant for CRVS improvement processes, stakeholders' activities as well as resources available and needed to strengthen CRVS systems, coordination, among others.

Democratic Republic of Congo



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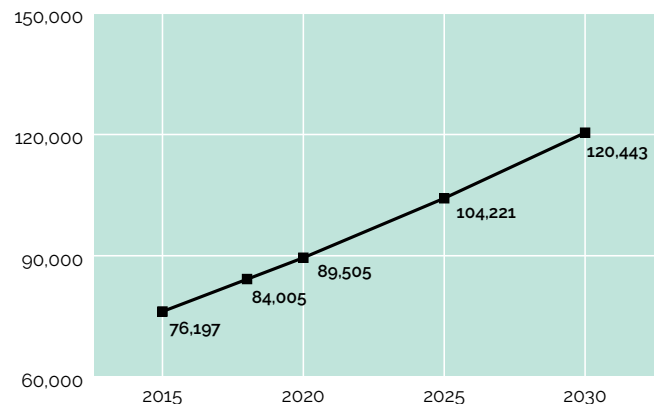
Country profile

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (hereafter referred to as DR Congo) is the second largest country in Africa, after Algeria, with a surface area of 2,344,858 square kilometres.¹ It shares a land border with 9 countries. In the north of the country are the Central African Republic and South Sudan. In the east are Tanzania, Burundi, Uganda, and Rwanda. To the south are Angola and Zambia, while the Republic of Congo borders the western part of the country. DR Congo is named after the Congo River which flows through many parts of the country.

- Capital city: Kinshasa
- Official Languages: French
- Ministry responsible for civil registration: Ministry of Interior and Security (Ministère de l'Intérieur et de la Sécurité)
- Civil registration agency: Civil Registration Division (Bureau de l'État Civil)
- National statistical office: National Institute of Statistics (Institut National de la Statistique).

DR Congo is administratively divided into 26 provinces, including the city-province of Kinshasa City. The provinces are subdivided into districts, which are further divided into cities, territories (rural areas), communes and chiefdoms/sectors, groups and villages.

Figure 1: Population projections (thousands)



CRVS dimensions

Births

Completeness of birth registration ²	Not available
Children under 5 years of age whose births were reported as registered	24.6% (2014) ³
Births attended by skilled health personnel	80.1% (2014) ³
Women aged 15-49 who received antenatal care from a skilled provider	88.4% (2014) ³
DPT1 immunization coverage among 1-year-olds ⁴	80% (2016) ⁵
Crude birth rate (per 1,000 population)	42 (2016) ⁵
Total fertility rate (live births per woman)	6.1 (2016) ⁵
Adolescent fertility rate (per 1,000 girls aged 15-19 years)	125.2 (2016) ⁶
Population under age 15	46.3% (2017) ⁷

Deaths

Completeness of death registration	Not available
Crude death rate (per 1,000 population)	10 (2016) ⁵
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	70 (2017) ⁸
Under five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	91 (2017) ⁸
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	693 (2015) ⁹

Marriages and divorces

Marriage registration rate	Not available
Women aged 20-24 first married or in union before age 15	10% (2017) ⁵
Women aged 20-24 first married or in union before age 18	37% (2017) ⁵
Divorce registration rate	Not available

Vital statistics including causes of death data

Compilation and dissemination of civil registration-based statistics	Not available
Medically certified causes of death data	Not available

Civil registration system

Legislative framework

The Government of DR Congo revised Law no N°87-010 on the Code of the Family issued in 1987 and replaced it with a law to amend and complete it. The revised Family Code, Law no 16/008, which is also the basis for the civil registration system, was issued and became effective in July 2016¹⁰. The revised law provides the legislative framework for registering live births, deaths and foetal deaths, marriage, separation, divorce, annulment, adoption, legitimation and recognition.

The law makes the registration of vital events mandatory. There is no provision in the law regarding the compilation and dissemination of vital statistics from civil registers.

Management, organization and operations

National CRVS systems coordination mechanisms

The National Coordinating Committee for CRVS has been operating at the technical level since 2009. This inter-institutional working group is in charge of monitoring civil registration activities in the DR Congo and improving the system.

Currently, there are three levels of coordination committees and a working group at the national level: (i) CRVS Steering Committee (Comité de Pilotage), (ii) CRVS Technical Committee (Comité Technique), and (iii) CRVS Technical Working Group.

The Steering Committee membership consists of the following: The Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of the Interior and Security, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Decentralization and Institutional Reforms, the Ministry of Customary Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General, the Superior Council of Magistracy, the Ministry of Human Rights, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Budget, the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Professional Education, the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Gender, Child and Family, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the National Institute of Statistics (INS), the National Office of Population Identification (ONIP), and Civil Society including opinion leaders and religious confessions. The other committee and working group membership mirrors that of the Steering Committee to a certain extent.

Administration level registration centres

In DR Congo, the organization of the civil registration system is centralized. The country is divided into provinces, cities, territories (rural areas), communes and chiefdoms/sectors. There is a total of 979 local civil registration offices at the Chiefdom/Sectors administrative levels. Out of these, 102 are classified as urban and the remaining 877 as rural Chiefdom/Sectors. Each of these offices are manned by a civil registrar. Some of the Chiefdoms/Sectors cover a large territorial unit. These civil registration offices also keep the civil status records. There is a plan to create secondary offices in reference hospitals or large health establishments.

Accessibility of civil registration offices

Accessibility to the civil registration office is very difficult in regions with equatorial climate where it rains almost all year and where there are no roads. Sometimes one has to borrow canoes with all the risk that entails to access the registration centres. There is also the problem of mass population displacement due to insecurity in some of the regions.

Most households reside more than 10 kilometers from the local registration offices and it could take more than 8 hours for informants to reach a service centre on foot. In some places the furthest households are located more than 50 kilometres from the civil registration office and it could take about two days on foot to reach them.

Registration of vital events

This section provides some of the highlights in the registration processes in DR Congo.

- Definitions of live births and deaths are not aligned to international recommendations.
- Civil registration offices prepare legal and statistical paper records separately.
- There is no fee for registering births, marriages, divorces and deaths. Fees are imposed on late registrations.
- Fees are charged for issuing birth, marriage, divorce and death certificates.
- The civil registration acts or register has four carbon copies for each event. Archiving of civil registration acts is done at three levels: local registration office, court, and central registration headquarters. The top sheet is given to the applicant; the second copy is kept at the registry of the High Court of the jurisdiction where the civil registry office is located, the third copy is sent and archived at the Central Records Office in Kinshasa, and the fourth copy is kept at the issuing registry office.

Table 1: Time for registering of vital events according to the Family Code of 2016¹⁰

Vital events	Time for registering an event	Delayed registrations	Remarks
Birth	3 months	Comprises financial penalties and additional costs for obtaining a supplementary judgment	Articles 114 and 116
Death			Article 191
Marriage	3 months		Article 370
Divorce	Immediately after divorce is settled by competent court or authority		Article 576

Table 2: Direct costs associated with issuance of vital events registration and certificates

Vital events	Fee for certificates		Cost of certificates in US dollars and local currency
	Yes	No	
Birth	X		USD 1.96 (3,200 FC)
Marriage	X		USD 1.96 (3,200 FC)
Divorce	X		USD 1.96 (3,200 FC)
Death	X		USD 1.96 (3,200 FC)

1 Congolese Franc (FC) = US\$ 0.00061¹¹

Interface of civil registration system with other sectors and operations

Interoperability of functions between the Ministries of Interior, Health and the National Institute of Statistics is done through a few specific activities. In DR Congo, health facilities play an important role as notifiers of births and deaths although the link with civil registration offices is weak.

A birth certificate is required to apply for passport or access education services and health care. Land inheritance process also requires proof of parentage through a birth certificate. DR Congo does not have a National Identity Management system in place.

Since 2008, the DR Congo has a technical coordination committee to monitor civil registration activities at the national and provincial levels. Although it does not have a legal basis, the coordinating committee brings together several stakeholder government sectors to discuss and collaborate in the civil registration process. A bill has been drafted to formalize the interinstitutional collaboration.

Vital statistics system

Vital statistics

The National Institute of Statistics is responsible for collecting, compiling and disseminating vital statistics from population censuses, household surveys and administrative records such as vital events registers. However, the civil registration law has no provision that clearly mentions the sharing of information on births, marriages, divorces and deaths with the National Institute of Statistics or others.

The National Institute of Statistics resorts to demographic surveys and population censuses to estimate some of the vital statistics. With the support of UNFPA, UNICEF, it collects and disseminates vital statistics reports from the Demographic and Health Surveys.

Causes of death

For deaths occurring in health facilities, causes of death are coded according to the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) format in some of the health facilities. It is not clear whether the standard WHO form is used. A verbal autopsy approach is also used in some places to collect information on causes of death for non-institutional maternal and neonatal deaths.

In DR Congo, statistics on causes of death has not been compiled and published so far.

Digitization

Computerization

Computers are not used in the civil registration process. All registrations in DR Congo are currently paper-based.

Mobile technology application

Mobile technology is not used in any part of the civil registration process.

Sample registration forms

Registration forms were not available on the website of the Civil Registration Department.

Improvement initiatives and external support

Improvement plans and budget

Strategic plan

With the support of UNICEF, a first evaluation was carried out in 2012. A Strategic Plan for 2013–2018 had been drafted but the results of the evaluation were not used. With the support of the World Bank/Global Financing Facility (GFF), improvement of the CRVS systems is under way, which will include a comprehensive assessment of the CRVS landscape in the country.

Budgetary allocations and requirements

- Budgetary requirement for the 2013–2018 plan years: Not available
- Budgetary requirement for fiscal year, July 2018–June 2019: Not available
- Government treasury allocation for the current fiscal year: Not available
- Budgetary supplement provided by development partners: USD 20 million from the World Bank and GFF for the period 2016–2020
- Budget gap for the current fiscal year (July 2018–June 2019): Not available

Activities identified in the national plan as high priorities

This information was not made available from the Civil Registration Division.

Support from development partners

The main financial partners mentioned by the Civil Registration Division (Bureau de l'État Civil) to be supporting the civil registration system in DR Congo are UNICEF and GFF.

International organizations	Kind of support
UNICEF	Financial and technical support, with particular focus on birth registration
Global Affairs Canada	Financial support to increase birth registration rate
Italian Development Cooperation and World Bank / Global Financing Facility	Support the reform of CRVS systems, and specifically to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertake comprehensive CRVS assessment and develop costed national CRVS strategy and implementation plan; • catch-up registration campaigns through schools; incentivize civil registration staff to complete registration process; support communication campaigns; off-set costs for birth certificates fees and issue them free; and support complaint hotline and website; • digitizing of historical records

Proposals to improve coordination

Coordination is a key element in the national CRVS systems landscape. The following suggestions aim to improve national stakeholders and development partners working arrangements.

National CRVS stakeholders

- Develop a joint national action plan including the problems and responsibilities of each stakeholder
- Define and establish mechanisms for collaboration and coordination between stakeholders in a legally binding document.
- Allocate an adequate budget for the optimal functioning of the coordination mechanism.

National institutes and development partners

- Given the many technical and funding partners (bilateral and multilateral), they should form a single forum in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to facilitate effective exchange with the national coordination body.
- Support the activities submitted by the national coordination group according to the needs presented by the stakeholders and not according to the will of the partners.
- Hold joint monitoring meetings regularly and simplify the procedures to access the technical and financial support from development partners.

Resources

Websites:

- Institut National de la Statistique(INS) / National Institute of Statistics (NIS) – <http://www.ins-rdc.org>
- Ministère de la Santé / Ministry of Health: <https://www.minisanterdc.cd/>
- UNICEF – DR Congo: <https://data.unicef.org/country/cod/>

Additional materials

- S.O.S Enfants. *État civil en RD du Congo. Une problématique lourde, un vaste programme de régularisation.* <http://www.sosenfants.com/actionrdc-etat-civil.php>
- UNHCR. 2019. Democratic Republic of Congo: Whether a birth certificate for someone born in Lubumbashi can be issued in Kinshasa; whether there is a central register of births in Kinshasa. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/403dd2160.html>
- UNICEF – DRC. 2017. Mon identité pour le développement de mon pays Enregistrement des naissances en RDC. <https://medium.com/@UnicefDR Congo/enregistrement-naissances-rdc-47d527e113d0>
- UNICEF. 2017. Annual Report for Democratic Republic of Congo. https://www.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/DRC_2017_COAR.pdf

Conclusion

The Civil Registration Division in DR Congo is working with development partners and national stakeholders to modernize the country's CRVS systems. Such an improvement initiative in any country requires strong coordination among key stakeholders. The CRVS coordination mechanism in DR Congo exists but it is currently rather weak and needs to be reinvigorated. The success of CRVS systems is also dependent on the organizational capacity of the anchor agency for civil registration systems. The agency needs to be well structured with the adequate budget to manage the modernization initiative.

The second conference of African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration in 2012 recommended that all African countries assess their CRVS landscape and develop improvement plans. It is imperative for DR Congo to conduct a well-designed comprehensive assessment tailored to the needs of the country. Such an assessment needs to investigate weaknesses and gaps both on the supply and demand sides of CRVS systems to inform the strategic plan development process. It is encouraging to learn that, since 2018, the DR Congo has embarked on a process that would reform the existing systems of registration of vital events and compilation of statistics. It has also focused on learning from experiences of other African countries that have made remarkable progress in this field and on adopting international concepts and standards. The country is also working towards modernizing the systems by applying technologies. It is to be expected that these efforts will lead to a lasting improvement in the CRVS systems.

Endnotes

- 1 United Nations. 2018. *Demographic Yearbook – 2017*. https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/products/dyb/dyb_2017/.ST/ESA/STAT/SER.R/47.
- 2 Birth or death registration completeness means the actual number of registered births or deaths divided by the estimated number of births or deaths in a particular country or area, in a specified time period usually a year. For further reading refer to ECA, ESCAP and Statistics Norway (2016).
- 3 Ministère du Plan et Suivi de la Mise en œuvre de la Révolution de la Modernité (MPSMRM), Ministère de la Santé Publique (MSP) et ICF International, 2014. *Enquête Démographique et de Santé en République Démocratique du Congo 2013-2014*. Rockville, Maryland, USA : MPSMRM, MSP et ICF International. <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR300/FR300.pdf>
- 4 DPT1: Surviving infants who received the first dose of diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus (DPT) vaccine.
- 5 UNICEF. 2017. *The State of World's Children 2017*. <https://www.unicef.org/sowc2017/>
- 6 World Bank. 2018. *Adolescent fertility rate*. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/sp.ado.tfrt>
- 7 United Nations. 2017. *World Population Prospects. Volume-II: Demographic Profile*. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2017_Volume-II-Demographic-Profiles.pdf
- 8 United Nations Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation. 2018. UN IGME. *Total Under-5 Mortality Rate, Infant Mortality Rate and Neonatal mortality database 2018*. <http://www.childmortality.org/>
- 9 World Health Organization. 2016. *World Health Statistics 2016: monitoring health for the SDGs, sustainable development goals*. https://www.who.int/gho/publications/world_health_statistics/2016/en/
- 10 Democratic Republic of Congo. 2016. Law Amending and Complementing Law No. 87-010 Of August 1, 1987 Concerning the Code of the Family. Accessed May 16, 2019. <http://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/Code%20de%20la%20famille/Loi.15.07.2016.html>
- 11 Google. Accessed on April 5, 2019. https://www.google.com/search?safe=active&rlz=1C1EJFC_



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